



City of Fremont Budget News

Sharp Drop in Revenues

In response to a multi-year sharp drop in revenues, the City:

- Cut costs by more than 25%
- Cut staff by more than 20%
- Aggressively pursued new retail to increase sales tax

What are some of the consequences of these reductions?

- Crime prevention efforts cut
- Response to low-priority police calls dropped
- Fire station closed / rotating station closures
- Fewer streets repaired
- Library hours reduced
- Park events eliminated
- New senior center postponed



The City Council's top priorities for funding are police, fire, and maintenance of public streets, trees, and facilities. Unfortunately, the budget reductions over the past several years have meant less funding for these important services, and we are now seeing some of the consequences.

Crime Rates Increase

In the last five years, crime rates have risen, especially in areas of violent crime and auto theft.

- Violent crime is up 32%
- Auto thefts are up at least 50

According to a nationally recognized annual crime report, Fremont was the 23rd safest city in the year 2000 among cities with a population above 75,000. The latest report revealed that Fremont has slid to 59th in the rankings.



If Fremont were staffed equal to the average of the 58 safer cities, we would need 102 more officers (about 56% more than we currently have). We know that this level of Police staffing is not necessarily needed in Fremont, but we know that policing can be more proactive with more officers, and that more proactive police work is one of the keys to preventing crime.

Slower Response to Fire and EMS Calls

The budget reductions in the Fire Department, coupled with more calls for service, are translating into slower response times to fire and medical emergencies. The Fire Department's goal is to respond to almost all calls within 5 ½ minutes. In the years since the City closed a fire station and implemented rotating station closures, the Fire Department has not been able to achieve this standard.

In fact, since 2003, the demand for service has increased and response time has continued to slip.

Actual response to 90% of all calls:

2003: within 6 ½ minutes

2004: within 7 ½ minutes

2005: within 8 ¾ minutes

Call volume has increased 10% since 2003

Response time is also hindered by Fremont's large land area relative to its number of fire stations. Fremont has 10 fire stations covering 92 square miles. For comparison, the City of Santa Clara also has 10 fire stations, but only 19 square miles to cover.



Streets, Parks, Buildings in Decline

The City has had to reduce its maintenance of streets, parks, and public buildings due to budget cuts. This has led to:

- More potholes and rougher ride
- Street trees trimmed every 20 years instead of every 7 years
- Playground equipment removed instead of repaired or replaced

The most obvious signs of deteriorating streets are the numerous potholes the City is unable to fill and the rougher ride on many of the streets. At current budget levels, streets will continue to fall apart. The City simply cannot keep up.



The City also maintains 46,000 street trees. Several years ago, crews were able to trim trees on a seven-year cycle. The City now has fewer maintenance staff, and they must focus on critical repairs first. For this reason, the tree-trimming cycle has stretched to 20 years, which will lead to more risks of fallen tree limbs and poorer appearance.

The City also has aging park equipment. Since there is not enough staff to keep up with park equipment and playground

repairs, staff often has to remove equipment to prevent safety risks, when they otherwise would repair or replace it.

Unless more money is invested in maintaining the community's assets, they will continue to deteriorate, and they will be much more expensive to repair in the future.

No Restoration of Services for FY 2006/07

For Fiscal Year 2006/07, which begins on July 1, 2006, the City is projecting a modest 5% growth in ongoing revenues. Although this is good news, the City will still not have enough money to support projected costs, and certainly not enough to restore any services that have been cut.

To close the gap between income and costs, the City will spend down all of its fund balance (which can be thought of as the "checking account") and may have to tap into its Budget Uncertainty Reserve (the "savings account") for the first time. It's important to remember that this Budget Uncertainty Reserve is one-time money; once it's spent, it's gone.

Although no further budget or staffing cuts are anticipated at this time, there is still not enough money to begin restoring services that have been cut or adding anything new.

As a result, the City will continue to provide only minimal levels of police, fire, maintenance, and other important services for the foreseeable future.